

Many people have a special place where they go to experience nature. Perhaps it is a park, or a campsite, or a favorite hiking trail. For Sigurd Olson, it was a cabin on a tree-covered glaciated point of rock. He called it his "Listening Point," and it is at the center of his book of the same name.

In his book, Sigurd Olson talks about that place on Burntside Lake from his first night sleeping there under the stars to the eventual building of his cabin:

"From this one place I would explore the entire north and all life, including my own," he writes. "For me, it would be a listening-post from which I might even hear the music of the spheres."

From his cabin, Olson also experienced the wonder and danger of significant storms in the Boundary Waters, an experience nearly identical to my own. Over the Fourth of July weekend this year, shortly before I arrived, serious winds hit the Boundary Waters, downing trees in a quarter of the wilderness area.

I was comforted to learn, as I arrived at Listening Point to see Bob Olson clearing trees from the driveway, that Listening Point has weathered significant storms before. Sigurd Olson writes of another storm, and its aftermath in *Of Time and Place*:

As we approached Listening Point we could see the damage, trees down and twisted, blocking the road to the cabin. We chopped and hacked our way through to the turnaround and found the trail to the cabin was a crisscross of broken treetops, a jackstraw puzzle of tangled debris. It was unbelievable; I looked at the trees, remembering how over the years we had treasured each one of them. . . .

Olson continues:

I sometimes wonder about the meaning of such things as this tornado—why it happened, why it leapfrogged over some areas and hit others. We paddled to the islands beyond Listening Point and saw where many trees had been blown over, all old landmarks along the shore. They would lie there for many years until they, too, would sink into the soil and disappear.

Mr. President, I have been a defender of the Boundary Waters, and my constituents adore this area.

I have also joined in the fight to protect the public lands of Southern Utah, and have sponsored legislation to have the lands of wilderness potential in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore identified. All my efforts are linked to unfinished business that Sigurd Olson began in the Boundary Waters and to his commitment to designating and protecting our country's special wild places.

In addition to conveying my own admiration for Sigurd Olson, I rise today to share the reflections of my own home state. Wisconsinites have a special fondness for Sigurd Olson for several reasons. Olson, who began his environmental education as a kid from Northern Wisconsin who loved the outdoors, turned out to be a serious conservationist whose name is among the greatest conservationists of the Twentieth Century. With his special wilder-

ness writing, Olson was a reformer who didn't come across as self-important.

Second, Wisconsinites truly appreciate an accomplished outdoor enthusiast turned advocate. That's a rarity in politics, especially these days. Olson will be long remembered for his character and fundamental decency in defense of the wilderness he loved. On behalf of myself and the citizens of my state, as well as all Americans, I wish Sigurd Olson a very happy birthday. We are a greater country for his dedication.●

#### TRIBUTE TO FREDERICK A. MEISTER

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, my home state, the great Commonwealth of Kentucky is known throughout the world for many fine things—fast horses, bluegrass countryside, the best burley tobacco in the world and winning basketball teams. And of course, Kentucky is also known as the home of fine Bourbon whiskey.

Bourbon is interwoven through the history, heritage and economy of our Commonwealth. First developed in 1797 by an early settler from Virginia named Elijah Pepper who settled in Versailles, Kentucky and built a still behind the Woodford County Courthouse, Bourbon is a distinctively Kentucky product that still plays an important role in our state's economy.

For the past nineteen years, the interests of this deeply rooted Kentucky industry have been served very well by a gentleman with no Kentucky roots of his own: a man from the snowy plains of Minnesota—Frederick A. Meister. For the past nineteen years, Fred Meister has served as President and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS). He is planning to retire soon and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him, on the behalf of the many Kentuckians who are employed by the distillery industry throughout our Commonwealth for a job well done.

While the leadership of many Washington trade associations seems to come and go, Fred's tenure at DISCUS stands out as a distinguished exception. For almost two decades, the millions of Americans who choose to drink in moderation could not have had a more zealous advocate. At the same time, Fred and DISCUS have wisely taken a hard line against drunk driving and other forms of reckless drinking.

Whether the issue has been taxes, free trade or the First Amendment freedom of distillers to advertise their products on television and radio, Fred has been there making a persuasive case for the spirit industry's legitimate commercial interests. No one has fought harder or more effectively on these issues than Fred Meister.

At the same time, Fred and DISCUS long ago recognized that the beverage alcohol industry must do its part to stop drunk driving and other forms of reckless drinking. Under Fred's leader-

ship, the industry has made great progress in this regard.

Under his leadership, DISCUS has successfully developed model legislation, the Drunk Driving Prevention Act, which has encouraged many states to pass life saving laws preventing drunk driving, including a ban on open containers and "zero tolerance" for underage consumption. Fred was among the first to call for the establishment of the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving. Subsequently, he served with distinction on this panel. Under Fred's leadership, DISCUS has maintained and enforced a strict Code of Good Practice governing the advertising and marketing of distilled spirits. In 1991, the majority of the DISCUS companies made a multi-million dollar investment to form an organization known as the Century Council which went on to develop a number of life saving programs aimed at the problems of underage drinking, drunk driving and, most recently, college binge drinking.

As Fred Meister steps down from the leadership at the Distilled Spirits Council, he leaves behind him a proud and positive legacy and he leaves behind an industry that is both commercially strong and socially responsible.

I know that I can safely speak on the behalf of the thousands of Kentuckians who earn their living in the distilling industry when I say "Congratulations and thank You" to Fred Meister for a job well done.●

#### APPRECIATION TO JOHN BRADLEY

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, on Friday, August 6, 1999 John Bradley completes a two year assignment to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In view of his outstanding performance and contributions to the Committee and our country's veterans, I am taking this occasion to recognize John.

In mid 1997, the Committee was without a professional staff member with expertise in veterans' health care delivery system. I turned to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the temporary assignment of such a person. In truth, I anticipated retaining whoever was assigned only until such time as my Staff Director was able to interview and propose a permanent professional staff member. VA's then Acting Secretary Herschel Gober agreed to the detailing of John Bradley since John had served a similar assignment to this Committee in the 103rd Congress.

John Bradley turned out to be the consummate professional and the search for a permanent professional staff member was halted. A veteran of the Vietnam conflict and a career employee of the VA with over 25 years of service, primarily with the Veterans Health Administration, John made an immediate impact. With the Committee's legislative agenda completed, he directed with great professional skill the rigors of staff conferencing with his House counterparts.

It also soon became apparent that John was not a bureaucrat or intent on maintaining the status quo. In fact, he is an intellectual and innovative thinker who is willing to explore new ideas to advance the cause of veterans health care.

During his assignment to the Committee, John played a major role in shaping the following legislation: the Veterans' Health Care Improvements Act of 1998, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, and the Veterans Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment Act of 1998. Additionally, John has spent many hours this year working on S. 1076, the Veterans Benefits Improvements Act of 1999 which I hope will pass the Senate soon.

Upon his departure and on behalf of the Committee, I extend my deep appreciation to John for his courage, his innovation, his professionalism and, above all, his enduring concern for veterans. He shall be missed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Executive Calendar Nos. 192, 193, and 200. These nominations are Michael A. Sheehan to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism; Robert S. Gelbard, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Indonesia; and William B. Taylor to be Ambassador during tenure of service as Coordinator of the U.S. Assistance for the New Independent States.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

#### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Michael A. Sheehan, of New Jersey, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large.

Robert S. Gelbard, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Indonesia.

William B. Taylor, Jr., of Virginia, for the Rank of Ambassador during tenure of service as Coordinator of U.S. Assistance for the New Independent States.

#### NOMINATION OF JACK E. HIGHTOWER OF TEXAS TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Mr. LOTT. In executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the nomination of Jack E. Hightower be discharged from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and further the Senate proceed to its consideration.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

#### NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Jack E. Hightower, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for a term expiring July 19, 2004.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2465.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2465), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report. (The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 27, 1999.)

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am very pleased to bring before the Senate the Military Construction Conference Report for fiscal year 2000.

Mr. President, this conference report was passed by the House of Representatives last week by a vote of 412 to 8. It was sent to the Senate late last week and now awaits or final passage.

We have worked hard with our House colleagues to bring the Military Construction Conference to a successful conclusion.

It reflects a strong bipartisan effort of behalf of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Both bodies took a different perspective on the allocation of military construction funding for the Department of Defense.

However, in the final conference report, we met our goals of promoting quality of life initiatives and enhancing mission readiness.

Mr. President, this bill has some points I want to highlight. It provides a total of \$8.37 billion for military construction.

Even though this is an increase of \$2.9 billion over the President's budget for fiscal year 2000, it is still a reduction of \$79 million from what was appropriated last year.

The conferees rejected the administration proposal to incrementally fund military construction and family housing projects throughout the Department of Defense.

Instead the conferees believed that fully funding these projects was essential for the well being and moral of the men and women who serve in uniform.

Some 43 percent of the bill is allocated to family housing—a total of \$3.6 billion. This includes new construction, improvements to existing units and funding for operation and maintenance of that housing.

We strongly protected quality of life initiatives. We provided \$643 million for barracks, \$22 million for child development centers, and \$151 million for hospital and medical facilities.

We provided a total of \$695 million for the Guard and Reserve components. Overall this represents an increase of \$560 million from the President's budget request.

Many of those projects will enhance the readiness and mission capabilities of our Reserve and Guard forces, vital to our national defense.

I would like to thank my ranking member, Senator MURRAY, for her assistance and support throughout this process. She and her staff was extremely helpful.

I commend this product to the Senate and recommend that it be signed by the President without delay.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to bring before the Senate this conference report on the fiscal year 2000 military construction appropriations bill—the first of the 13 regular appropriations bills to be completed this year.

This is a good bill, leaner than we would wish but sufficient to meet the Services' most pressing military construction needs, particularly in terms of readiness and quality of life projects. The projects funded in this bill will give the men and women of our armed forces—and their families—a wide array of improved facilities in which to work, to train, and to live.

In my home state of Washington, for example, this bill provides nearly \$129 million in funding for 16 different military construction projects plus \$9 million for Army family housing at Fort Lewis.

Congress was faced with a difficult situation this year when the Pentagon, in a radical departure from regular procedure, requested incremental funding for the entire slate of fiscal year 2000 military construction projects. Thanks to the cooperation of Chairman STEVENS and Ranking Member BYRD, and to the efforts of Senator BURNS on the